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LOOSE HINTS

On the S U B J E C T of

NON-CONFORMITY.



[Price One Shilling.]

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LOOSE HINTS

On the SUBJECT of

NON-CONFORMITY.

Addressed to the Right Réverend the

LORDS BISHOPS of ENGLAND.

By a GENTLEMAN,

Formerly a MEMBER of the MIDDLE TEMPLE.



“ A child may hold a candle to a man, or a weak
“ and simple man to a wise one ; and thereby be of
“ service to him, while employed about matters of
“ great importance and difficulty.”



LONDON:

Printed for J. JOHNSON, No. 72, St. PAUL's
CHURCH-YARD. MDCCLXXIII.

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 LOOSE HINTS, &c.

I Fear, my Lords, that it is more painful for me, who feel for your lost credit, to animadvert upon your public conduct, than it will be to your Lordships to read my strictures. For when you resolutely turned yourselves against the Truth, and your duty to Christ your Lord and Master, you turned a deaf ear to all salutary advice, and to every remonstrance: and his faithful servants are now by some bid to expect the severity of your displeasure.

It is pretty generally understood, that your Lordships are shortly to rouse from your lethargy, and are ere long to exert your vigilance for the discovery and exemplary correction of heretical pravity.

The only discouragement to you on the outset of this business, must be the loss of the writ *de hæretico comburendo*, or I would maintain the converse of the opinion of one of your brethren, and say, that all designs of punishment for opinions, which

begin with a curse, generally end in a fagot: out the fact is, that an Act of the 29th of Charles the Second (1676) gave the final stroke to this wholesome severity. It has indeed been more than insinuated, that your predecessors exerted their power for its continuance; you cannot therefore reproach them with an inattention to the *interest of the Church*; they did, what yourselves would have done, and you would have done what they did. But your zeal, my Lords, might possibly have been attended with better success, as you might have contrived some stipulated equivalent in lieu of the favor; and in this our day, from your more immediate connection or alliance with the state, and your known disposition to *oblige*, I question not but you would have paid them *in kind*. However, this convenient and effectual engine for the terror of some, and the correction of others, was happily destroyed. The obstinate virtue of the Commons and Lay-Lords was, even in the reign of an unprincipled Stuart, above the controul or influence of an intolerant Hierarchy. This seasonable check should have reminded your fraternity of one declaration of our blessed Saviour's, which you will not regard, and would willingly forget, *I am not come (said the Founder of our Religion) to destroy mens lives, but to save.*

It

It has of late been whispered that the artillery of the Church is to be directed, by your respective engineers, against all those of the Clergy who omit, or alter, any part of the Liturgy of the Church.

Your Lordships have, no doubt, first fully satisfied yourselves that every sentence, word and syllable, which now stands in the Common Prayer-book, is strictly and purely scriptural; and that all the injunctions to strict conformity are *practicable*. So much concerns the ease and innocence of your own consciences; for your Lordships must move slow and fairly, and settle all qualms *within*, before you will be prepared to encounter the difficulties from *without*. If then you have satisfied yourselves in this matter, whatever time and pains it may have taken, they cannot be said to be ill bestowed. The mountain to be removed was no small one; the world will therefore give you proportionable credit for your labor, and pronounce you all, without exception, *tall Men*. The high conceit this will give us of your abilities, will raise our expectations to a more than ordinary pitch: it is your next care (and duty, it seems) to see that we are not disappointed.

Thus satisfied that our public Liturgy has the *Imprimatur* of Christ and his Apostles, the next question before you is, how

standeth the laws (not of God, for they are out of the question, but the laws) of the realm. Here you should call before you a formidable tribe of Canonists and Civilians, nor should you omit the gentlemen of the Long-robe: to each of these sages your Lordships should distinctly propound the Question, *What is written in the Law?* and separately accost them with an, *How readest thou?* With this assistance, joined to your own skill in things pertaining to Holy Church, you must rake together a sufficient quantity of knowledge and adroitness in the Canon, Civil, Common, and Statute Laws; so that, with that quickness and discerning judgment which is peculiar to your Bench, you may be able to pick and cull from each, and splice together, a sufficient portion of all, to bear down against all the opposition of the numerous host of those who will be compelled to act upon the defensive. You must be prepared to be your own advocate as well as judge: you will be obliged, however *reluctantly*, to copy after those Lawyers who can,

with ease,
Twist words and meanings as they please.

Thus armed cap-a-pe, your Lordships will be prepared for the conflict, and only want a subject whereon to display *in terrorem*

rorem (I suppose) the strength of your talons.

Your questors and retainers need not be long before they spring you game; let them begin with the very Ministers who live under the shade of your Cathedrals*,

* The case of the Reverend Henry Norman, late a Minor-Canon of Winchester, cannot be here overlooked. But before the *justice* of his deprivation can be maintained, the public should be fully satisfied by a *certificate* from the choir of Winchester, that every other member to that Cathedral does in all and every thing strictly conform to the rules of the establishment. It is no excuse to say, that Mr. Norman was *singular* in his omissions, when *none* are allowed, and *all who omit* subject to the censures of the Church. The hard case of this Gentleman was brought before the public, by a writer in the London Chronicle of May 29, under the signature of *Curiosus*. Mr. Norman's answer appeared in the same paper of June 10. The further correspondence between Mr. Norman and his anonymous friend appeared in the same Chronicle of June 22, and August 7 and 14, 1773. It should seem the Dean and Chapter of Winchester were *too provident* to trust the issue of their prosecution to the *laws of the Realm*, and the *verdict of twelve men*, as is expressly directed by the statutes of 2 and 3 Edw. 6. c. 1. and 1 El. c. 2. In hopes of making sure of their game, they have proceeded upon the authority of Canons, which stand in direct contradiction not only to the *spirit*, but the *letter* of two acts of Parliament, and which have assumed a dispensing power over the supreme legislative authority of this Kingdom. And I should humbly think that their Reverences will be more obliged to their *good luck*, than their *good looking to*, if their summary *canonical* proceedings are not argued and examined into by more impartial judges in a certain court in Westminster Hall.

with

with those who officiate in your respective Parish-churches in the country; for with candor and deference towards them, I will venture to say, that every parish in the kingdom will afford you a *criminal*, as amenable before your presence, and as subject to your process, as the veriest petitioning heretic of them all. Thus you will run no risk of a fruitless search after delinquents; nor will you be led a distant chase in quest of them.

So confessedly clear and general would be the charge of liturgical irregularities in the Ministers of our Church, that I will not suppose your Lordships even to be put to the proof by any on whom you may lay violent hands. I will suppose a confession of the charge, and a challenge on the merits of the cause between you. On this ground I must suppose you to meet some of your Christian brethren.

A small difficulty does indeed offer itself here (though matters are in such forwardness) for your attentive consideration, and you would do well to remove it. Though the number of defaulters will be found so great, your Lordships will do equal justice; you will not subject yourselves to the charge of a more atrocious and malignant crime, than that which you mean to punish. You will be necessitated to prosecute indiscriminately,
but

but then again, will you destroy the reputed orthodox (or righteous) with the heretics (or wicked)? Now as learned Divines have been said not seldom to conjure up objections against Christianity, without being able to answer them, so have I raised this difficulty, which I only intended to have mentioned by the bye, and cannot now get over it. It is a stumbling-block to me; but, on the presumption that it will be foolishness to your Lordships, I will proceed in my disquisition.

After thus far stating the case, the chief business which I have to lay before you in these my lucubrations, is the present state of Universal Non-conformity to the Canons and Rubric of our Church, which enjoin the use of the Liturgy; nor will I omit to mention other matters, to which Conformity, or Obedience, is required, in many cases, on the same authority; in some, even by the authority of Parliament.

If from an attentive consideration of the letter and spirit of these injunctions, your Lordships should be convinced of the *difficulty* and *inexpedience* of strict Conformity in some Instances, and of the *Impossibility* of it in others; at one time, perhaps, occasioned by the gradual, but great change in the manners of the age; at another,

other, by the express contradictions in this part of our ecclesiastical polity. And that in this view, the constitution of our Church lays its Ministers under the *necessity* of neglecting, or omitting, some of its ordinances, I must appeal to your Lordships skill in the science of disputation for one argument, which will justify the infliction of pains and penalties in requiring obedience to them. I appeal to the principles of justice against the singling out individuals, as a sacrifice at the shrine of personal resentment or of power. I appeal to those feelings, the force of which will occasionally steal upon you, in defiance of all violence offered to them; I appeal, my Lords, to the feelings of men, and to the consciences of Christians. I plead the cause of those, and of those only, who are already suffering for Righteousness-sake; of those who are laboring under burdens which are almost too heavy for them; but who yet cannot, with a safe conscience, and in duty to their only Master, lay them down; of those who pass through the pilgrimage of this life in no other hope than that of obtaining that which is to come. Before you finally determine upon the *expediency* of your councils, reflect on the general devastation you must make; once more consider the Protestant principles of your Church; and

above all, consider, live, and act, in the Spirit of Charity, of Forbearance; in a word, act in the Spirit of the Gospel of Christ.

From the fulness of my heart, these hints and reflections have slipped my pen. But, as my design is to suggest, not to advise, I must return to the discharge of my more immediate engagement to state the universal defection in the Ministers of the Church of England (whether they be reputed *staunch* orthodox, or *rank* heretics) from the injunctions and directions contained in the Canons and Rubric. That I may do this in a method the least exceptionable and invidious, I must request the attention of your Bench to the following quæries; leaving myself to the judgment of the candid and unprejudiced for the answers which should be given to each, and the consequences necessarily resulting from the conviction which attends them.

1. Do not the greatest part of the Clergy say that *some things want altering*; yet for this they are liable to Excommunication by one or other of these Canons; the 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th? And should they question the excellency of the government of the Church under your Lordships, Excommunication again awaits them by the 7th Canon. Should it so happen
that

that your conduct had been the occasion of doubt on this point, might you not be considered as accessories before the fact?

2. If any Minister maintaineth any doctrine contrary to the 39 Articles, by the 5th Canon he is to be excommunicated; and by the 13th Eliz. chap. 12. § 2. if he shall maintain any doctrine contrary to any of the said Articles, (meaning those Articles *which concern the confession of the true Faith, and the doctrine of the Sacraments*) he is to be deprived of all his ecclesiastical promotions.

3. If any deny the 1st. 2d. or 5th Articles, by 9th and 10th W. 3. chap. 32. (the words are, "deny any one of the
" Persons of the Holy Trinity to be God,
" or shall assert or maintain there are
" more Gods than one, or deny the Chri-
" stian Religion to be true, or the Holy
" Scriptures of the Old and New Testa-
" ment to be of divine authority;" such books, I suppose, as are deemed canonical by the 6th Article) shall for the first offence be judged incapable to enjoy any emoluments; if possessed of any, the same shall be void; for the second offence be disabled to sue, to be guardian, or executor, or legatee, or to bear any office, and to be imprisoned for three years.

4. Does every Minister read the Common Prayer on every Morning and Evening,

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ing, as the preface to the same ordereth; or on every holiday and their eves, without diminishing therefrom, or adding thereto, agreeably to the 14th Canon, and 13th and 14th Car. 2. chap. 4. § 2? or does every Minister read the Litany every Wednesday and Friday, as is enjoined by the 15th Canon?

5. Do all Ministers who administer the Communion in Cathedral Churches wear a *Cope*, according to the 24th Canon? Or does every Parochial Minister, who is a Graduate, wear his *Hood*, appertaining to his degree, according to the 58th Canon? Or do such as are not Graduates wear upon their Surplices, instead of Hoods, *some decent Tippet of black, so it be not silk*, as is ordered by the same Canon? Or, if these Canons are virtually annulled by the Rubric for order of Morning and Evening Service, (established by 13 and 14 C. II.) do all Ministers conform thereto, by retaining and using agreeably to it, *all such ornaments as were used in this Church of England by the authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI**?—N. B. See some Rubrics of
Edward

* Till the passing of the last mentioned act of Charles 2d, these Canons might have been considered as the exercise of a power contained in a proviso § 25. of 1 El. c. 2. establishing the use of such ornaments as were

Edward VI. in Burn's Ecclef. Law, vol. 2. p. 276. 4°.

6. Do no Ministers give the Communion but to fuch as kneel, according to the 27th Canon?—Quære, What is to be done in the Vifitation of the Sick?

7. Do all Ministers refuse to admit a parent to answer as godfather or godmother for his or her own child? Or do all Ministers take care to inquire whether all godfathers and godmothers have received the Communion, as the 29th Canon ordereth them to do?

8. It is prefcribed by Can. 38. that if any Minister omit to ufe the form of Prayer, or any of the Orders or Ceremonies in the Communion-book, he fhall be fufpended; and if after a month he doth not reform, and fubmit himfelf, he fhall be excommunicated; and if he fhall not fubmit himfelf within the fpace of another month, he fhall be depofed from his Miniftry. If he affigns any reafons for fuch omiffions in the Book of Common-prayer in his defence, by word, or in writing, by 3d, 4th, 5th, or 8th Can. (as

were in ufe in the 2 Ed. 6. until, and only *until other order fhould be taken therein*; but the Rubric above-mentioned being eftablifhed by the fubfequent ftatutes of 13 and 14 C. 2. which referring again to thofe in ufe 2 Ed. 6. feems to repeal the 2 Canons refpecting this matter, by fending us back to where they found us,

above)

above) he must be excommunicated. If he cannot with a good conscience again subscribe unto the 39 Articles, by the 6th Can. he must be excommunicated. If, in consequence of this refusal to subscribe, or repentance of, having subscribed, he renounces his Ministry, he is to be excommunicated, by the 76th Canon. But on the authority of Parliament, if there are any who refuse strict Conformity to the use of the Book of Common-prayer, being thereof lawfully convicted *by the laws of this realm, by verdict of twelve men*, he shall, by 2 and 3 Ed. VI. c. 1. §. 1. and 1 El. c. 2. §. 4. forfeit for his first offence the profits of some one of his benefices, at the king's option, for one year, and be imprisoned for six months. For the second offence, imprisoned a year, and deprived *ipso facto*. For the third offence, imprisoned during life. If he has no spiritual promotion, he shall, for the first offence, be imprisoned a year; and, for the second offence, during life.

9. Do no Ministers serve more than one Church or Chapel in one day, but where the said Church or Chapel is not able to maintain a Minister, according to the order of the 48th Canon?

10. Do all those Ministers, who are not licensed in a Diocese, study *only* to read plainly and aptly, (without glossing or adding)

ing) the Homilies, according to the 46th and 49th Canons? Or, In how many Churches in any one Diocese are the Homilies read at all? Quære, To what does a Curate's licence relate? Is he not empowered, by the tenor of his ordination, to officiate in the Church of England in every part of the service, save only the part of preaching?

11. Does every Minister require a stranger to shew his licence before he admits him to the use of his pulpit, agreeably to the 50th Canon? Or, is the name of every such Preacher entered in a book, together with the name of the Bishop of whom he had licence to preach, as the 52d Canon directeth?

12. Do no Preachers oppose in the pulpit the doctrines of another who hath used the same, without consulting the Bishop according to the 53d Canon?

13. Do all Ministers use the Form of Prayer before Sermon, which is prescribed by the 55th Canon? Does every Minister four times a year, declare in his Sermons that *all usurped and foreign power is for just causes taken away and abolished; and that the king of these realms is the highest power under God*, agreeably to the 1st Canon, though this Prayer before Sermon is again enjoined in the 6th Art. of the King's directions to the bishops in 1714?

14. Does every possessor of a living preach twice every year in his Cure?—If not, let him be suspended, says the 56th Canon.—*Quære*, Instances among those who hold livings in commendam.

15. Does every Minister, upon every Sunday and Holiday, before evening-prayer, for half an hour or more, catechise the Children? And is any offender herein either reprov'd, suspended, or excommunicated? Or are such children as neglect to come, or their parents, who prevent their coming, excommunicated, agreeably to the order of the 59th Canon? Or does every Curate diligently, upon Sundays and Holidays, instruct and examine children in some part of the Catechism, agreeably to the design of the Rubric at the foot of this Office?

16. Do any Ministers on the Sunday *bid* the Holy-days or Fasting-days in the ensuing week, according to the 64th Canon and the Rubric? Let those who neglect, be admonish'd for the first offence; for the second, let them be censured according to law.

17. Does every Minister enter the *Christenings*, Marriages, and *Burials*, in the Register *himself*, according to the 70th Canon? If any do not, the Bishop, or his Chancellor, shall convent him, and

proceed against him, as a contemner of this Constitution.

18. Do any Ministers observe the injunctions of the 74th Canon, respecting decency in apparel? *

19. Does every Minister who resorts to taverns and alehouses, who drinks or riots, who spends his time idly, or who plays at dice, cards, or other unlawful game; does every Minister who thus practiseth, feel

* That the reader may not be at a loss to know what this decency of apparel is, which is here enjoined, I will give the description at large of those habits, without which Ministers are not, by the Canon, to appear abroad. *Archbishops, Bishops, not to intermit to use the accustomed apparel of their degrees. All Deans and Doctors in Divinity, &c. having any Ecclesiastical Living, shall usually wear Gowns with standing Collars, and Sleeves strait at the Hands, or wide Sleeves as is used in the Universities, with Hoods or Tippetts of Silk or Sarcenet, and square Caps. And that all other Ministers shall also usually wear the like apparel as is aforesaid, except Tippetts only. And all the said Ecclesiastical Persons above-mentioned shall usually wear in their journeys Cloaks with Sleeves, commonly called Priests Cloaks, without Garbs, Welts, long Buttons, or Cuts. And no Ecclesiastical Person shall wear any Coif or wrought Nightcap, but only plain Nightcaps of black Silk, Sattin, or Velvet. These required only for the sake of Decency, Gravity, and Order. In private houses, and in their studies, the said Persons Ecclesiastical may use any comely and scholar-like apparel, provided that it be not cut or pinked, and that in public they go not in their Doublet, Hose, without Coats or Cassocks: and that they wear not any light-coloured Stockings. Poor beneficed Men, and Curates (not being able to provide themselves long Gowns) may go in short Gowns of the fashion aforesaid.*

the

the weight of *ecclesiastical censures with severity, according to the quality of his offence,* as the 75th Canon ordereth?

20. Do all Ministers present such of their parishioners who are of the age of 16, and have not received the Communion, according to the 112th Canon?

21. Do all Ministers present all Popish Recusants within their respective parishes, above 13 years of age? Or all such as are *popishly given*? Such as neglect herein, let them be suspended, says the 114th Canon.

22. Do all Ministers read over in their Parish-churches, once in every year, in the afternoon, before Divine Service, the said Constitutions and Canons ecclesiastical, in compliance with King James's direction, in his ratification of the same? Or do the Archbishops and Bishops see the same executed, agreeably to the said King's pleasure?

In defence of strict Conformity of our Ministers to this part of our *happy* religious establishment, I do not suppose your Lordships will be inclined to take advantage of my omissions, and, for the sake of *decency* and good order, take into your service the 18th Canon, which saith, No man shall cover his head in the Church or Chapel, except he have some infirmity; in which case, he is to wear a *night-*

cap, or coif: nor will you urge the utility or necessity of the 72d Canon, which alloweth no man to exorcise, or cast out devils, without a licence.

I must repeat what I have before said, that I cannot help you to one argument, which will justify the exacting Conformity to one Canon, without enforcing the whole: and in the number there are not a few, which are not always regularly discharged by your Bench. I will here only mention the 60th Canon, which enjoineth Confirmation to be duly performed once in three years. If your Lordships should stop here, to lament over the very low reputation of this sorry, this monkish system, you cannot but confess how deserving it is of the contempt of all orders of men. You must look back with secret displeasure on the impolitic conduct, not only of your predecessors, but of yourselves, who have, on all occasions, obstinately and tenaciously opposed every Reform,—even in these wretched outworks of our Ecclesiastical establishment.

To distinguish between the present authority and force of those Canons which could best be spared, and those very few which might be left in a reformed code of Church discipline, would be to risk the loss of all, by an impolitic confession.

They

They must all stand or fall together ; for if they are binding upon the Clergy in one case, they are in all, so far as they do not expressly declare against a Statute. But as it has been solemnly determined that these same Canons do not *proprio vigore* bind the laity : and custom has warranted such an almost general Non-compliance with them from the Clergy ; it would be worth your Lordships while to state the case to some able common Lawyer, how far a Court of Law would compel obedience to *any* of the Canons, because it is most certain that such Court would consider the whole of equal authority, where there was no interference of a Statute. Was a Court of Law to determine otherwise, how much more vague and indeterminate would be the penal Laws of the Church, than those of the State ; and would, contrary to every principle of legislation, instead of being the parent of good order and discipline, serve not only to entrap the unwary, but always be an engine at hand, ready to be directed against the most circumspect. Your Lordships cannot be such strangers to the temper and spirit of Englishmen, who value themselves on the establishment of legal liberty, as to conceive, that any authority, short of that of Parliament, and which affected either the reputation

or property of the subject, would make a foundation, whereon you would think it *prudent* to try the issue of your project. Doubtless you should be prepared with some more cogent arguments than have occurred to me, or an appeal to Cæsar would, at one stroke, lay down the utopian project of universal external Conformity*.

I shall now submit to your Lordships consideration, some queries relating to the Rubrics, which have not been already mentioned. And some learned Ritualists have pleaded very earnestly in their behalf, both with respect to their use and expediency, as well as their authority.

1. Do any, or do no Ministers refuse the Communion to those described in the

* The learned Mr. Justice Blackstone, speaking of the authority of the Canons, refers to a case in Sir John Strange's Reports, in which it was determined they do not bind the Laity; *whatever regard the Clergy may think proper to pay them.* Com. Introduction, § 3. It would not be foreign to the question before us, to consider how far the spirit and proceedings of our Spiritual Courts are agreeable to *Magna Charta*, which saith, *Nemo capiatur aut imprisonatur, nisi per iudicium parium, & legem terræ*; or to a subsequent statute, 25 Hen. 8. c. 19. § 2. (upon which last act the authority of the present Canons is founded) which enacteth, that *no Canons, &c. shall be made or put in execution within this Realm, by authority of the Convocation of the Clergy, which shall be contrary or repugnant to the King's Prerogative Royal, or the Customs, Laws, or Statutes of this Realm; any thing contained in that Act to the contrary thereof notwithstanding.*

Rubric

Rubric at the head of this Office, that is, *all open and notorious liwers*, even when they answer the further description in the 26th and 109th Canons? If any do, is not such refusal cognizable before the Courts of Law, particularly when such persons come to qualify for any civil or military office, under the Test Act, where no exceptions are made? Even before the passing of that Act, some Lawyers have thought, that the parties should be *convicted* of such offences by *confession in open Court*, or by *sentence of the Judge*, as not otherwise amounting to *notorium juris*.* Yet, after all these contradictory authorities, the Communion is frequently, if not always, agreeably both to Scripture and Humanity, administered to capital convicts. Should not then the laws in this case be altered? or, that our practice might harmonize with the Christian scheme, be entirely repealed?

2. Do all Parochial Ministers read the first part of the Communion-office, the Lord's Prayer and Collect following, the Ten Commandments, &c. standing on the north side of the Communion Table, agreeably to the Rubric?

* See further matter on this subject in Archdeacon Thomas Sharpe's Charges on the Rubrics and Canons; Discourse 3d.

3. Do

3. Do all Parochial Ministers in the Morning Service, on Sundays and Holidays read (when there is no Communion) the Prayer for the Church-Militant, together with some of the Communion-Office Collects and Blessings? Or are those Ministers who read these parts of the Communion Office *after* the Sermon, warranted by the Rubric so to do?

4. Do all Ministers admonish sick persons to make their wills, and move them earnestly, if they are of ability, to be liberal to the poor, agreeably to the Rubric in the office of Visitation of the Sick and the 84th Can.?

5. Does every Minister *sing* or say the Creed, commonly called the Creed of Athanasius, the thirteen times in the year, as the Rubric directs?

6. Does every Minister read the Communion on the first Day of Lent in every year?

7. Does every Minister (not a licensed preacher in a Diocese, and consequently to whom the liberty given in the 67th Can. reacheth not) use the Absolution in the office of Visitation of the Sick, according to the Rubric? Or can the positive injunction of the Rubric, which stands immediately before the said Absolution, be dispensed with (even by a licensed Preacher) upon the authority of the Canon?

With

With respect to some partiular statutes.

1. Does every Minister read the several services appointed for the 5th of November, the 30th of January, the 29th of May, and the 25th of October in every year?—Or does every minister read, at the several stated times in the year, the several acts of most of the said days, the Act against profane swearing, or the Act of Uniformity of 5 and 6 Edw. VI. and others ordered also to be read?

Quære.—How is the reading of the several acts of parliament abovementioned to be reconciled with the Rubric after the Nicene Creed, which after directing briefs, citations, excommunications to be read, order is made that nothing shall be read by the Minister but what is prescribed *in the rules of that book, or enjoined by the King's authority* (as the proclamation against vice and immorality) *or by the ordinary of the place*;—unless such acts are considered as virtually repealing the limitation in the Rubric.

2. Do all Lecturers not only make their declaration of assent to the Book of Common Prayer the first time they preach, but renew it before the first lecture in every month afterwards?—if any do not, by 13 and 14 Charles II. c. iv. §. 19. he is disabled

abled to preach that, or any other lecture or sermon in that, or any other church, &c. until he conforms. And if any person is so disabled by this act to preach any sermon, or lecture, he shall suffer three months imprisonment in the common goal. §. 21

3. Does every schoolmaster (or every clergyman, on his commencing schoolmaster, or private tutor) make the declaration of conformity required by 13 and 14 Charles II. c. iv. §. 8. as explained and amended by 1 W. and M. sess. 1. c. viii, §. 11.—if nay, he shall suffer three months imprisonment for the first offence, and three months imprisonment, and pay five pounds for the second.

Thus much, my Lords, I thought necessary to lay before you and the world, And should this plain state of facts, and their obvious deductions prevail with you to drop your design of strictly enquiring into, and prosecuting all liturgical irregularities; you will be under greater obligations to me, than possibly you will chuse to acknowledge. But, should you with undaunted courage begin with your suspensions, deprivations, excommunications, fines, imprisonments against the preachers of christianity, and of protestantism, may these sheets be instrumental to their defence; may they enable them to
baffle

baffle the persecutions of their enemies, by the clear reasonings which are deducible from them. May such exertion of the arms of hell, and antichrist in the service of a christian and a protestant society, be productive of a clear and legal security being given to the sufferers and their successors in worldly heresy. May the Laity of England, seeing they are immediately concerned in having the pure milk of the word preached to them, in lieu of the tithe of their Mint, Anise and Cummin, take part with those who bear the burden and heat of the day, the *Parochial Clergy*; may they jointly fight the cause of God and his Christ, and in the end destroy the unconstitutional and antichristian powers of an ecclesiastical establishment.

Equally indifferent to your smiles or your frowns, these sheets, my Lords, wait your acceptance. Should either you or others think that I have used any unjustifiable asperity of language, convince me of it, and I will blot out the words for ever; but I must remind both you and them, whoever they be, that he who striketh the first stroke must be answerable for the consequences.

F I N I S.

